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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MAPUTO 001000

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SUBJECT: THE WEAK STATE OF SMALL PARTIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

REF: 03 MAPUTO 01664

1. (U) SUMMARY. Facing presidential and legislative elections in December of 2004, Mozambique will likely showcase impressive two-party competition between the major political competitors, FRELIMO and RENAMO-UE. Small third party forces are in a weak stage of development and require capacity-building so that they may attract a legitimate base of support and draw up and articulate sound party principles. The only potential bright spot for small independent parties may be with the Party for Peace, Democracy, and Development (PPD), led by ex-RENAMO member, Raul Domingos. The newly passed general elections law will likely create greater transparency in the upcoming elections, however opposition parties already complain of fraud in the electoral process. END SUMMARY.

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A LACKING THIRD PARTY FORCE  
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2. (U) In advance of the 2004 general elections, econ/poloff and political specialist held a series of meetings with leaders of small political parties to gauge political outlook, assess small party preparation, and seek feedback on the recently approved general elections law. FRELIMO, the current ruling party, has enjoyed power since Mozambican independence in 1975. RENAMO-UE, the major opposition force, comprised of RENAMO and ten small parties that together form a coalition, is just beginning to get a taste of power, showcasing an extremely close presidential race in the 1999 general elections, and winning mayorship of four of thirty-three municipalities in the 2003 municipal elections (REFTEL). In 2004, current FRELIMO President Joaquim Chissano will step down and a new FRELIMO contender, Armando Guebuza, has already taken the campaign block. RENAMO-UE will continue to support its perennial presidential contender and party leader, Afonso Dhlakama. Although Mozambique has achieved generally healthy two-party competition, what it fiercely lacks is a legitimate third party force.

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THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS  
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3. (SBU) Sadly, many small parties are not able to articulate a party platform or speak articulately about party priorities. The four parties represented in our discussions, PAMOMO - Democratic Party for the Reconciliation of Mozambique (independent), PIMO - Independent Party of Mozambique (independent), PT - Worker's Party (independent), and PCN - National Convention Party (part of RENAMO-UE), spent significant time complaining about the state of democracy in Mozambique and the unfairness of elections, without offering any true solutions to improve the situation. Starting out our mission by speaking to PAMOMO leader, Albano Maiopue, an attorney and former advisor to Dhlakama, he was scathingly critical of the Mozambican democratic system and the current state of political affairs. He described the 2003 municipal elections as a "huge electoral injustice", claiming abuses of fraud on the part of FRELIMO and forecasting the upcoming election to be even worse. Disappointed by the current system, Maiopue had no suggestions for improving it, only encouraging a greater observation force and greater party equality. He repeatedly complained about the lack of funds small parties have to work with and how this translates into a vacuum for true multiparty competition. With around 25,000 supporters, PAMOMO holds no seats in the Parliament and its strongest support is found in the North (Zambezia, Cabo Delgado, and Nampula). Running independently in the 2004 legislative elections, PAMOMO is not expected to achieve the 5% vote threshold necessary to put a representative in the Parliament.

4. (SBU) Similar discussions took place with Malgalhaes Ibramugy, Secretary General of PIMO, a second independent party. Although PIMO stands for the Independent Party of Mozambique, it is also known as the Islamic Party of Mozambique, as a vast majority of its members are party to the tenants of Islam. The president of the party, Yacub Sibindy, who is also the nephew of RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama, is an outspoken and well-recognized political figure throughout the country, who wins significant media attention. The party was founded in 1993 when a Muslim group of deputies in Parliament established like-minded policies and created PIMO. The Constitution forbids parties to be

established based along religious or tribal lines, however PIMO dismisses that it is a religiously-affiliated party. Although it runs independently, PIMO won three seats in the municipal assemblies during the 2003 elections and runs a heavy campaign in the North, where most of its support, particularly Muslim support, is found. Describing the current registration period as a "fiasco", Ibramugy took stabs at FRELIMO governance and explained the "widespread intimidation" that occurs throughout the country, stating that non-FRELIMO supporters are prevented from registering. Calling Mozambican politics a "dirty game", he criticized the work of observers and donors as half-hearted, saying the international community must "open its eyes" and pay greater attention to the entire political process, from the opening day of registration to the final announcement of results at a national level. Although PIMO unfairly describes the current political situation in Mozambique as "unhealthy", it enlists broader support than other small parties by putting itself in the spotlight. PIMO also has access to greater funding than other small parties (source unknown), which may account for its limited success.

15. (SBU) The Worker's Party, PT, has not established a broad media presence, but gains some strength by representing the working masses. PT, a leftist party founded in 1993, is independent of RENAMO-UE. Its founder, Miguel Mabote, campaigns wearing a helmet, bringing to life the spirit of the party. PT, gaining most of its support from the southern provinces of Gaza and Inhambane, won seats in the 1998 municipal elections most likely attributed to RENAMO-UE's decision to boycott the elections. In 2003, PT did not win any seats in the municipal assemblies. PT described reducing unemployment, providing education to the masses, and improving health conditions and combating HIV/AIDS as top party priorities. Demonstrating a refreshing and optimistic view of Mozambique and its political process, Mabote said that Mozambique has an important political and economic role to play in the region. Although PT exhibited a more promising and less accusatory political stance, it still complained of a lack of funds to function as an effective third party force. PT is not expected to make an impact on the current year presidential or legislative electoral outcomes.

16. (SBU) Undeniably the most impressive of the four small party leaders, Lutero Simango, President of the National Convention Party, is currently a deputy in the National Assembly. PCN, a party of intellectuals and academics, joined the RENAMO-UE coalition in 2003. Simango's father was a senior leader in FRELIMO during the days of Mozambique's transition to independence and was murdered by the party for allegedly maintaining overly close ties with the Portuguese. Simango's brother, Deviz Simango, a member of RENAMO, recently won the most contentious mayoral race in the 2003 municipal elections in Mozambique's second largest city of Beira. Simango was complimentary of the new electoral law, stating that it will create positive change in the upcoming elections. PCN has developed a campaign slogan, "Five objectives for Five Years (of governance)". The five objectives are: justice, inclusivity, economic participation, employment of youth and women, and a united nation. Simango stressed that PCN has great internal capacity as a party of intellectuals and businessmen. When asked why PCN joined RENAMO-UE, Simango stated the party needed a "strong machine" that could lend financial support and an image to their small group of supporters. With a strong social base, RENAMO-UE was the way for PCN to win parliamentary representation. Simango believes that with the upcoming changes in government there should be a reformed government philosophy that focuses on developing the countryside, jump-starting the paralyzed economy, and reforming "professional beggars" into businessmen. Appearing as the only organized small party with a leader competent to present realistic and coherent party views, PCN will likely be successful in the 2004 legislative elections if it remains part of the RENAMO-UE coalition.

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THE NEW ELECTORAL LAW  
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17. (U) On May 12, 2004, the Parliament approved the new general elections law, and soon after, the President of the Republic, Joaquim Chissano, signed it into force. With the exception of a few articles, most of the innovations in the new electoral law were already part of the local elections law, however, lessons learned from the 2003 municipal elections made way for several important new additions. Those articles most likely to affect change are Articles 53, 95, and 98. Article 53 allows political party agents monitoring the voting operations at polling stations to receive original copies of the minutes and result tally sheets, signed and stamped. Articles 95 and 98 authorize intermediary counting to take place at the provincial level (as per the norm), yet, votes must be counted district by district and results must be summarized and presented in a chart, district by district, and subsequently distributed and posted at all polling stations. In theory, these changes will allow greater transparency in the process by providing selected party

representatives with official results at the most basic level and validating provincial electoral results by a district-level breakdown. These additions came as a compromise between FRELIMO and RENAMO-UE directly following the 2003 municipal elections.

18. (U) In response to the new law, small parties tend to be supportive of Article 53 and denounce Articles 95 and 98 as "no new change". The four parties represented in our discussions uniformly agree that greater access to official results at each polling station is an improvement to electoral transparency. On the other hand, small party forces believe that district-level breakdown of votes at the provincial level will still allow for fraud. How? Parties allied with RENAMO, as part of the UE, complain that the transportation of ballots from polling stations to provincial electoral commission headquarters allows for tampering of the process (i.e., the stealing and/or fabrication of votes). Additionally, the parties complained that representatives of the National Electoral Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE), that

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administer the electoral process, are FRELIMO agents that introduce fraud into the process. Finally, parties believe that the most significant amount of fraud occurs during the country's registration process. As Mozambique just finished registration for the 2004 elections, there have been several allegations by RENAMO-UE and small parties that RENAMO supporters were refused registration. There is also fear among the opposition that the 18-day period set aside for registration is not enough time to adequately register all voters. The opposition has requested a registration extension, but the CNE has rejected this proposal.

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ON THE POLITICAL HORIZON  
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19. (SBU) COMMENT: On the heels of the national elections, it is clear that FRELIMO and RENAMO-UE will be the only true competitors. Although competition between the two major parties is likely to be hot, an honorable showing by small, independent parties is not expected. The ten small parties which form the RENAMO-UE coalition will benefit from the support RENAMO-UE wins, and will likely win some legislative representation in the Parliament. Independents like PIMO, PT, and PAMOMO are unlikely to reach the 5% voter support threshold necessary to put a candidate in Parliament.

10. (SBU) RENAMO-UE and small parties rightly complain and contest certain electoral issues that may be cause for fraud in the electoral process. However, these forces spend an overwhelming amount of their time complaining and pointing out "how bad" the situation is, that they generally discredit themselves and their parties. Changes in the electoral law should lead to a more transparent process in the 2004 elections. The 2003 municipal elections were declared "free and fair" by the European Commission electoral expert group and it is expected that the 2004 presidential and legislative elections will run smoothly and on time (December 1-2). Although it is difficult to predict whether FRELIMO or RENAMO-UE will carry the most presidential or legislative votes in 2004, there is significant national interest in the outcome of the elections. On a small party front, the hope is that by the next municipal or presidential/legislative elections, more mature, developed, and capable third parties will compete and elicit a chance of having their voices heard at a national level. Through current USG programs, conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI), this capacity-building is currently underway. END COMMENT.

LA LIME